

# *Mesodon leatherwoodi*, A New Land Snail from Central Texas

BY

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(1 Plate)

ON 2 MAY 1965 A SERIES of an apparently undescribed *Mesodon* was collected during a visit to a locality in western Travis County, Texas. In August of the same year Tony L. Burgess and James H. Turner made a second trip to obtain more material of the form herein described as a new species. The specific epithet is given in memory of Robin Lee Leatherwood, Jr., a promising student of field biology who died of leukemia at the age of 16, the day after the species was first collected.

*Mesodon (Mesodon) leatherwoodi* PRATT, spec. nov.

(Figures 1, 2)

**Holotype:** United States National Museum no. 701581, Figure 1, collected during August, 1965, in talus at the base of limestone cliffs deeply shaded by oak-elm forest in West "Cave," a canyon formed by the collapse of a cave system at the Pedernales River crossing of the Bee Caves - Cypress Mill Road, 3 miles north and  $11\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Bee Caves, Travis County, Texas.

**Diagnosis:** A member of the *Mesodon binneyanus* group, distinguished by the combination of open umbilicus, obsolescent spiral sculpture, straight upper lip, flattened spire, and small size (diameter less than 19 mm).

**Description of the Holotype:** Shell depressed helicoid, whorls  $4\frac{1}{2}$  (measured along suture), greatest diameter 17.6 mm, height 8.5 mm; spire depressed, forming angle of  $150^\circ$ ; periphery subangular, becoming rounded on the last  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the body whorl; umbilicus open, diameter 2.2 mm; suture deeply impressed, descending slightly to the aperture; aperture oblique, lunate, plane of aperture

at an angle of  $40^\circ$  to the axis; peristome sharp-edged, thickening towards inner edge, upper margin straight, expanded at periphery, the expansion gradually increasing to reflection on the basal margin; thin, fragile columellar margin expanded to cover about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the umbilicus (often broken away in the series at hand); a very weak parietal tooth (present in 10 of 29 specimens); moderately strong radial striae, continuing unweakened onto the base; spiral sculpture virtually obsolete, absent above except for traces on the last  $\frac{1}{4}$  whorl, stronger below, discernable with some difficulty at  $30\times$  magnification; shell translucent, light brown, peristome white.

**Paratypes:** Numbers 94V-1490 and 94V-1491 in the collection of the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, no. 0098A in the collection of the Dallas Museum of Natural History, and no. 1200 in the author's collection.

Extreme diameters 14.8 mm and 18.4 mm, mean 16.7 mm ( $N = 29$ ).

## DISCUSSION

*Mesodon leatherwoodi* is most similar to *M. roemeri*. It is distinguished from *M. roemeri* by the smaller size, more depressed spire, more angulate periphery, and obsolescent spiral sculpture. The periphery is higher in *M. leatherwoodi*, about  $\frac{1}{3}$  the height of the body whorl below the suture; whereas in *M. roemeri* the periphery is at about the middle of the whorl. The suture is more deeply impressed in *M. leatherwoodi*. Although umbilicate specimens occur in many populations of *M. roemeri*, the columellar expansion of the peristome covers  $\frac{1}{2}$  or more of the umbilicus and is thicker and more durable than in

## Plate Explanation

Figure 1: *Mesodon leatherwoodi* PRATT, spec. nov. Holotype, U. S. National Museum no. 701581. West Cave, Travis County, Texas. Scale slightly less than  $\times 2$ , actual diameter 17.6 mm

Figure 2: *Mesodon leatherwoodi* PRATT, spec. nov. Paratype Dallas Museum of Natural History No. 0098A. West Cave, Travis County, Texas. Figures 2a, 2b, and 2c  $\times 2$ ; Figure 2d  $\times 1$

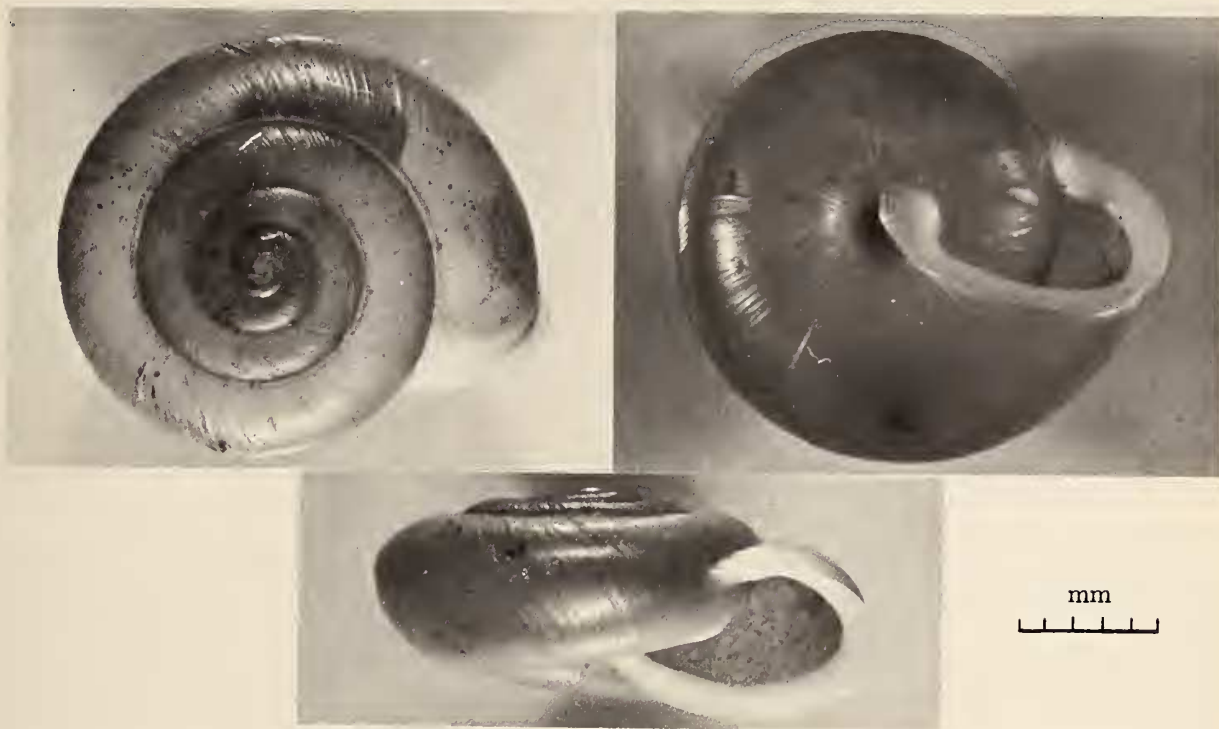


Figure 1

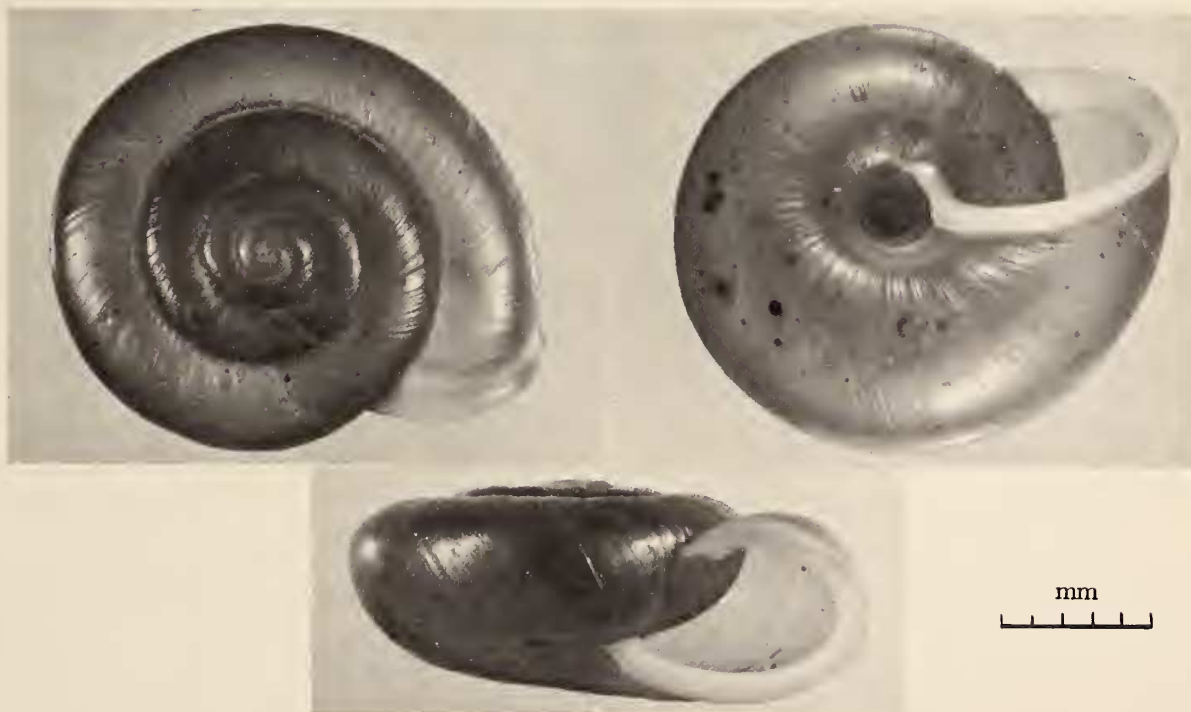


Figure 2